on coastal tourism. They have also obtained the services of World Tourism Organisation for preparing perspective tourism plan for Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh *vide* his letter dated 17.11.1998 had requested the Ministry of Tourism to release 50 per cent of the consultancy expenses, i.e. Rs. 1,86,89,677.00. Since the total budget available for the preparation of master plans/feasibility studies was less than Rs. 1.00 crore for the entire country, Ministry of Tourism could not provide assistance as requested for.

(c) The development of toruism in the country is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/U.T. Administration. The Central Ministry of Tourism, however, provides Central financial assistance to them for specific proposals prioritised in consultation with them every year. During the year 1999-2000, a sum of Rs. 9689.55 lakhs was sanctioned for State Governments/Union Territory Administrations out of which a sum of Rs. 222.22 lakhs was sanctioned to the State of Andhra Pradesh for the implementation of various tourism development projects.

Number of Custom House clearing agents

*506. SHRI SHIBU SOREN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Custom House clearing agents in Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai, city-wise;

(b) the details of the priorities/facilities made available to them and the terms and conditions for the appointment of these agents;

(c) whether it is a fact that as much as 3000 Bills of Entry (B/E) are pending for disposal in Mumbai alone;

(d) if so, the details of the pending cases in other cities; and

(e) the reasons for the delay and the action being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR) :

(a) The datails of the Custom House Agents, city-wise are as under :

	No. of Custom House Agents
Mumbai	1141
Delhi	604
Calcutta	191
Chennai	556

(b) Custom House Agents have been provided with basic infrastructural facilities, such as, working place/table space etc. for transacting day-to-day business.

Section 146 of the Customs Act, 1962 empowers the Department to appoint the Custom House Agents (CHAs). The CHA Licencing Regulations, 1984 (CHALR '84) prescribe the terms and conditions for the appointment of these agents. The licence is granted to the applicant on fulfilling the conditions laid down in Regulations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of CHALR '84.

(c) and (d) The pendency position of Bills of Entry (B/E) in various cities is given below (As on 31st March, 2000) :

Mumbai	2308	Hyderabad	24	Nhava Sheva	18
Delhi	299	Vishakapatnam	14	Bangalore	92
Calcutta	96	Amritsar	14	Mangalore	20
Chennai	327	Jaipur	22	Cochin	96
Ahmedabad	65	Kandla	16		

(e) Reasons for pendency include non-payment of duty by the importers, importers/CHAs not coming forward promptly for examination of goods, delay in reply to query memos by the CHAs/importers and offence cases etc.

The pendency of B/Es is closely monitored by the senior officers to ensure speedy clearance.

Busting of a racket operating in Oriental Bank of Commerce

*508. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Ministry of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any racket operating in connivance with the officials of the Oriental Bank of Commerce to defraud the Bank of crores of rupees has lately been busted;

(b) if so, the *modus operandi* of the racket; and

(c) the details of the officers and others apprehended in connection therewith?